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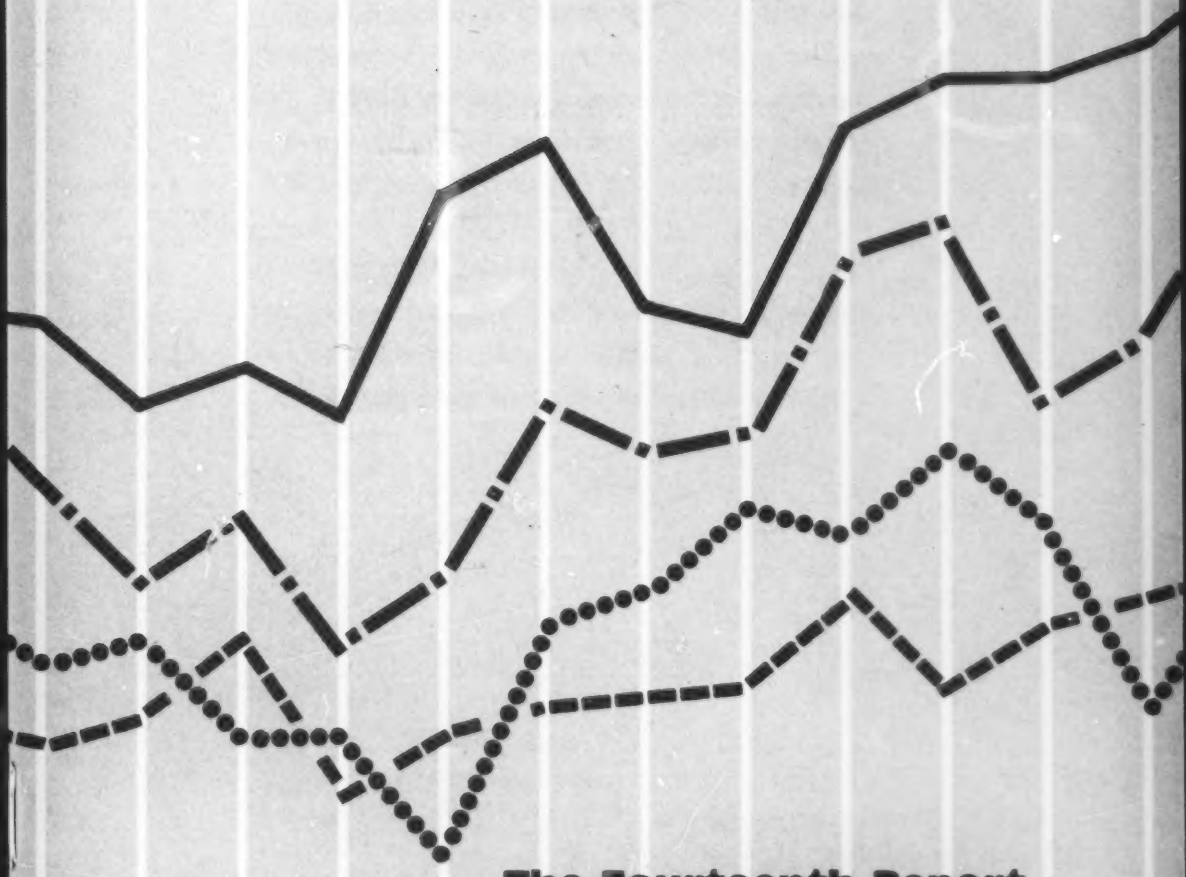
Public Attitudes Toward Television And Other Media In a Time of Change



The Fourteenth Report
In a Series
By The Roper Organization Inc.

This series of studies, begun in 1959, has made a unique contribution to the understanding by viewers and professional broadcasters of the role of television in our society.

The data have proved uniquely useful to many–scholars and educators, government officials at all levels, religious and civic groups, businessmen, broadcasters and interested viewers. That's why the Television Information Office has, over the years, supported and published these measurements, despite early findings that were not nearly as favorable to the television medium.

We believe you will find the Roper data informative, tracking trends and exploring new areas of concern as our society and media evolve.

DR. WILLIAM F. BAKER
Chairman, *Television Information Committee*
President, *Television Group,*
Westinghouse Broadcasting and Cable, Inc.

PREFACE

The findings reported here by The Roper Organization come at a time when television journalism and all news media, in fact, have become subjects of heightened interest. Public figures in and out of government have discussed, examined and occasionally sharply criticized aspects of press behavior. Not surprisingly, this has not kept those who seek the benefits of the press's attention from doing so.

There has been extensive coverage of the recent libel suits brought by General Westmoreland against CBS and by Israel's former defense minister, General Sharon, against Time Inc. These were, however, only two of what has been a growing number of similar big-money claims against journalists.

Pressure from an unusual complainant, the CIA, has been placed on the Federal Communications Commission to punish ABC for what the CIA claims is a violation of the Fairness Doctrine. In an unrelated expression of dissatisfaction with the "liberal bias" he sees in CBS network news, Senator Helms is urging conservatives to buy control of CBS and "become Dan Rather's boss."

Demands for millions in compensation, or the need to respond to other forms of attack are serious enough concerns to major media enterprises. And to smaller broadcasters and publishers they can be life-threatening. All media must be thankful that the appellate process frequently moderates egregious or punitive jury awards.

It has become increasingly important to understand the reasons for the dissatisfactions which prompt the legal actions against media and consider what might forestall them, short of violating the implicit obligation of news media to provide news freely and to use the First Amendment as its writers intended—to encourage robust, uncensored debate.

For thoughtful followers of the information processes, it is a given that the keystone supporting the bridge between journalists and viewers or readers is access to information: access to courts and city halls, to government agencies and elected officials, to military actions and to the great store of public records. Only real threats to national security or violations of personal privacy should bar our access to such persons, knowledge and events.

There are today disquieting signs that this access may diminish. The Grenada incident exemplified the instinct of an intrinsically authoritarian system, the military, to exclude the press from a clandestine action—even though the press could easily have been quarantined for immediate security reasons. Our knowledge of the early stages of the action has come from Cuba and ham radio and the military, instead of from Americans trained to observe events for the rest of us.

We hear of plans for muzzling government employees for life, to prevent leaks likely to have only short-term significance. The move toward more openness in the late Seventies has been followed by backsliding in the first half of this decade. Not just news people, but scholars, economists, businessmen, and all others who want access to government archives are finding it more difficult, more expensive and far slower going than it need be.

Against this background, the findings in the most recent of the TIO/Roper biennial studies of attitudes toward television and other media are encouraging. Of particular importance to television journalists and their audiences are the data on credibility and on performance in delivering many different kinds of information.

The data should encourage the further pursuit of excellence and, as the medium matures, one can expect that occasional lapses in self-discipline will grow rarer still. On balance, however, our democracy will be better served by an excess of zeal than of timidity.

ROY DANISH, Director
Television Information Office

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I

Trends in Attitudes Toward Television and Other Media: A Twenty-Six Year Review

By Burns W. Roper

During the twenty-six years since this series of studies was begun, we have seen television achieve an increasingly important position in the lives of Americans. Television became the dominant information medium in 1963, and has steadily increased its lead ever since.

Television has met the challenge of keeping up with great changes in American society since the start of these studies near the end of the Eisenhower years. Through times of political upheaval, enormous changes in sexual mores, moves for minority rights and moves for women's rights, television has changed with the times and become a more and more vital force in society. Like other institutions, television has had its share of critics, but among the public, critics remain in the minority. This study documents again the special place television holds in American life today.

Like past studies, this one included trend questions asked in previous years, and new questions asked for the first time. Trend questions show that television continues to be regarded by the public as its main source of news, and by the widest margin ever. Television continues to be the number one source of information on Presidential elections, Congressional elections, and statewide elections, and rivals newspapers as a source of information on local elections. Television once more is seen to be the most credible news source. People continue to give television high marks on national news coverage, with majorities ranging from

two thirds to over nine in ten saying television is doing an excellent or good job in each of nine different aspects of coverage.

In terms of local community institutions, television again leads churches, the police, newspapers, schools, and local government for good performance. The public continues to endorse the commercial system for television, with the presence of commercials seen as a fair price to pay for watching television by a better than three-to-one margin.

The new questions also show widespread support of television. Despite some criticisms of the way some ethnic, occupational and age groups are treated on television news, the consensus is that most of fifteen groups are treated fairly in the news. The exceptions are teenagers, who are thought to be treated too unfavorably, and major league sports stars and politicians, who are thought to be treated too favorably.

Local news coverage gets high marks with from just over half to over nine in ten rating each of ten kinds of local news coverage as "excellent" or "good." Further, television leads newspapers by nearly two to one as the main source of information about the work of organizations involved in efforts to improve the quality of life in the community.

A frequently controversial issue in recent years has been Freedom of the Press. This study shows that a large majority of the public believes that of eleven things published or broadcast we asked about—from news to novels and movies—all are covered by Freedom of the Press.

Finally, a new question confirms the importance of television commercials to Americans. By more than two to one over newspaper ads, magazine ads and radio commercials, television commercials are named as the leading source of information about products or brands of products people might like to try or buy.

Source of News

Since the first study in 1959, all questions comparing the various media have been asked before those questions that specifically focus on television, in order to avoid bias.

The first question in each study has asked people where they get most of their news. Television, which has led all other media on this question since 1963, has increased its sizable lead over the second place medium to the widest margin ever—24 points (vs. 21 points two years ago, and 18 points six years ago).

"First, I'd like to ask you where you usually get most of your news about what's going on in the world today—from the newspapers or radio or television or magazines or talking to people or where?"

Source of most news:	*12/ 59 %*	*11/ 61 %*	*11/ 63 %*	*11/ 64 %*	*1/ 67 %*	*11/ 68 %*	*1/ 71 %*	*11/ 72 %*	*11/ 74 %*	*11/ 76 %*	*12/ 78 %*	*11/ 80 %*	*12/ 82 %*	*12/ 84 %*
Television	51	52	55	58	64	59	60	64	65	64	67	64	65	64
Newspapers	57	57	53	56	55	49	48	50	47	49	49	44	44	40
Radio	34	34	29	26	28	25	23	21	21	19	20	18	18	14
Magazines	8	9	6	8	7	7	5	6	4	7	5	5	6	4
People	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4
All mentions	154	157	147	153	158	145	140	145	141	144	146	135	137	126

Until 1972, newspapers had led television as the main source of news among the college educated. Between 1972 and 1982, the two media have been almost even in this group, with newspapers ahead slightly in Presidential election years, and television slightly ahead in the others. Newspapers were ahead by two points in 1972, television ahead by one point in 1974, newspapers ahead by one point in 1976, television ahead by three points in 1978, newspapers ahead by three points in 1980, and television ahead by two points in 1982. This year, for the first time, television is ahead of newspapers among the college educated by a significant margin—ten points.

In all our studies, multiple answers have been accepted when people have named more than one medium. In 1980, 1982 and especially this year, the surveys show a lower number of total mentions—fewer multiple mentions—than in past years. This has resulted in lower percentages for all media. Because of the reduced total mentions, it is difficult to determine the intermedia trend (except between 1980 and 1982). One can, however, determine each medium's "share of audience" by repercentaging the figures above on the basis of total mentions, with the figures for all media in each year adding to 100 percent.

Share of audience:	*12/ 59 %*	*11/ 61 %*	*11/ 63 %*	*11/ 64 %*	*1/ 67 %*	*11/ 68 %*	*1/ 71 %*	*11/ 72 %*	*11/ 74 %*	*11/ 76 %*	*12/ 78 %*	*11/ 80 %*	*12/ 82 %*	*12/ 84 %*
Television	33	33	37	38	40	41	43	44	46	44	46	47	48	51
Newspapers	37	36	36	37	35	34	34	34	33	34	34	33	32	31
All others	30	31	27	25	25	25	23	22	21	22	20	20	20	18

This year, for the first time, television received over half of all mentions, the highest proportion it has ever received. Moreover, analysis of multiple responses has shown television steadily increasing its lead as the single most-relied-upon medium, except for a slight dip in 1978. This year, television has increased its lead again, with nearly half naming it alone.

Analysis of multiple responses:	*12/ 59 %*	*11/ 61 %*	*11/ 63 %*	*11/ 64 %*	*1/ 67 %*	*11/ 68 %*	*1/ 71 %*	*11/ 72 %*	*11/ 74 %*	*11/ 76 %*	*12/ 78 %*	*11/ 80 %*	*12/ 82 %*	*12/ 84 %*
TV only	19	18	23	23	25	29	31	33	36	36	34	39	41	46
Newspapers only	21	19	21	20	18	19	21	19	19	21	19	21	21	22
Both n'p'rs and TV (with or without other media)	26	27	24	28	30	25	22	26	23	23	27	20	20	15
N'p'rs and other media but not TV	10	11	8	8	7	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	2
TV and other media but not n'p'rs	6	7	8	6	8	5	7	5	6	5	6	5	5	3
Media other than TV or n'p'rs	17	15	13	12	10	13	13	12	12	11	11	12	10	11

The Relative Credibility of Media

Television has led as the most believable news medium since 1961, and in 1968 reached a two-to-one advantage over newspapers. In subsequent years it widened its margin, and, since 1971, has enjoyed a better than two-to-one advantage over newspapers. This is true again this year.

"If you got conflicting or different reports of the same news story from radio, television, the magazines and the newspapers, which of the four versions would you be most inclined to believe—the one on radio or television or magazines or newspapers?"

Most believable:	*12/ 59 %*	*11/ 61 %*	*11/ 63 %*	*11/ 64 %*	*1/ 67 %*	*11/ 68 %*	*1/ 71 %*	*11/ 72 %*	*11/ 74 %*	*11/ 76 %*	*12/ 78 %*	*11/ 80 %*	*12/ 82 %*	*12/ 84 %*
Television	29	39	36	41	41	44	49	48	51	51	47	51	53	53
Newspapers	32	24	24	23	24	21	20	21	20	22	23	22	22	24
Radio	12	12	12	8	7	8	10	8	8	7	9	8	6	8
Magazines	10	10	10	10	8	11	9	10	8	9	9	9	8	7
Don't Know/ No Answer (DK/NA)	17	17	18	18	20	16	12	13	13	11	12	10	11	9

II

Media in Election Years

After each election between 1970 and 1978, and again in 1982, people were asked the same questions about their sources of information on candidates running at three levels of government—local, state and national. In 1980 people were asked only about sources of information on candidates for local offices, since up to then that was the only area where newspapers had led television in acquainting people with candidates. In this year's study, all three levels of government were asked about again, with different halves of the sample asked about candidates for the United States House of Representatives and candidates running in statewide elections.

The four trend questions asked in the current and previous studies were:

"From what source did you become best acquainted with the candidates running in local elections—like mayor, members of the state legislature, etc.—from the newspapers or radio or television or magazines or talking to people or where?"

(X half of sample)
"From what source did you become best acquainted with the candidates for the United States House of Representatives from this district—from the newspapers or radio or television or magazines or talking to people or where?"

(Y half of sample)
"From what sources did you become best acquainted with the candidates running in statewide elections—like U.S. Senator and Governor?"

"And what about the candidates in the national election—for President and Vice President?"

In all studies from 1971 to 1978 newspapers led television in acquainting people with local candidates, although television was increasingly named as a news source. In 1980, television moved into the lead as a source of news. In 1982 and again this year newspapers again are in the lead by a very narrow margin.

Local elections:	*11/71* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %	*12/78* %	*11/80* %	*12/82* %	*12/84* %
Newspapers	41	41	41	44	45	36	39	41
Television	27	31	30	34	39	44	37	39
Radio	6	7	8	7	10	6	6	6
People	19	23	14	12	15	11	15	12
Magazines	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
Other	5	5	5	6	7	5	7	5
Total mentions	99	108	99	105	117	104	105	104

In the Congressional elections, television continues to show a lead over newspapers, and this year by the widest margin yet seen. This question was asked previously only in non-Presidential election year studies in 1974, 1978, and 1982. This is the first time it has been asked in a Presidential election year.

Congressional elections:	*11/74* %	*12/78* %	*12/82* %	*12/84* %
Television	40	48	46	49
Newspapers	35	38	31	33
Radio	6	8	5	4
People	8	10	9	7
Magazines	1	2	2	1
Other	5	6	7	4
Total mentions	95	112	100	98

In statewide elections, television has consistently shown a clear lead over newspapers as a source of information about candidates running in statewide races. This year television's lead is by a slightly less wide margin than in 1982.

(Charts continued on page 8)

Statewide elections:	*1/71* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %	*12/78* %	*12/82* %	*12/84* %
Television	51	49	48	53	55	53	54
Newspapers	29	39	33	35	39	29	33
Radio	6	7	6	5	8	6	6
People	10	9	6	6	8	7	6
Magazines	2	1	1	1	2	1	2
Other	4	3	3	3	5	5	3
Total mentions	102	108	97	103	117	101	104

Television increasingly overshadows newspapers as a source for becoming acquainted with candidates for national office, with television holding the record lead over newspapers it attained in the 1976 election.

National election:	*11/72* %	*11/76* %	*12/84* %
Television	66	75	75
Newspapers	26	20	19
Radio	6	4	4
People	5	3	3
Magazines	5	5	3
Other	2	1	2
Total mentions	110	108	106

Television's Treatment of the Presidential Candidates

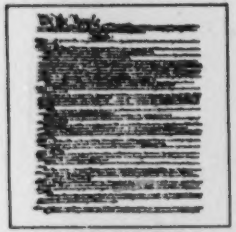
People were again asked a question, first asked in 1980, on how fairly they thought television news people treated the two major candidates in covering their Presidential campaigns.

Majorities thought both candidates were treated "about right" by television news people. However, of those who thought they were not treated "right," more thought TV news people were "unfair" to Mondale than thought they "favored" him, whereas more thought Reagan was "favored" than treated "unfairly." These results are very similar to those shown in 1980 for Carter and Reagan.

"We'd like to know how fairly you think television news people treated the two major candidates in covering their Presidential campaigns this year. First, (name candidate). Do you think television news people favored him, or treated him about right, or were unfair to him?"

	1980			1984	
	Carter	*Reagan*	*Anderson*	*Mondale*	*Reagan*
	%	%	%	%	%
Favored him	7	19	3	9	23
Treated him about right	69	69	54	70	64
Were unfair to him	17	5	30	16	8
DK/NA	7	7	13	5	5

Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.



THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Absolute freedom of the press to discuss public questions is the foundation stone of American living.

HERBERT HOOVER

IN ORDER TO ENJOY THE INESTIMABLE BENEFITS THAT THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS ENSURES, IT IS NECESSARY TO SUBMIT TO THE INEVITABLE EVILS THAT IT CREATES.

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE

THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH MAY BE TAKEN AWAY, AND DUMB AND SILENT WE MAY BE LED LIKE SHEEP TO THE SLAUGHTER.

G. WASHINGTON

CHIEF JUSTICE CHAS. EVANS HUGHES

The greater the importance of safeguarding the community from incitements to the overthrow of our institutions by force and violence, the more imperative is the need to preserve inviolate the constitutional rights of free speech, free press and free assembly...

(The First Amendment) presupposes that right conclusions are more likely to be gathered out of a multitude of tongues, than through any kind of authoritative selection. To many this is, and always will be, folly; but we have staked upon it our all.

JUSTICE LEARNED HAND

THOMAS JEFFERSON

...THESE PRINCIPLES (INCLUDING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS) FORM THE BRIGHT CONSTELLATION WHICH HAS GONE BEFORE US, AND GUIDED OUR STEPS THROUGH AN AGE OF REVOLUTION AND REFORMATION. THE WISDOM OF OUR SAGES AND THE BLOOD OF OUR HEROES HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO THEIR ATTAINMENT. THEY SHOULD BE

WALTER LIPPMANN

THE THEORY OF A FREE PRESS IS THAT THE TRUTH

is one of the bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic governments. VIRGINIA BILL OF RIGHTS

ALBERT CAMUS

A free press can of course be good or bad, but, most certainly, without freedom it will never be anything but bad.

THE CREED OF OUR POLITICAL FAITH, THE TEXT OF CIVIL INSTRUCTION, THE TOUCHSTONE BY WHICH WE TRY THE SERVICES OF THOSE WE TRUST; AND SHOULD WE WANDER FROM THEM IN MOMENTS OF ERROR OR ALARM, LET US HASTEN TO RETRACE OUR STEPS AND TO REGAIN THE ROAD WHICH ALONE LEADS TO PEACE, LIBERTY AND SAFETY.

REPORTING AND FREE DISCUSSION, NOT THAT IT WILL BE PRESENTED PERFECTLY AND INSTANTLY IN ANY ONE ACCOUNT.

A FREE PRESS IS NOT A PRIVILEGE BUT AN ORGANIC NECESSITY IN A GREAT SOCIETY.

THE NEXT TIME YOU GET MAD AT A TELEVISION NEWS REPORT KEEP THIS IN MIND.

A reminder from
The Television Information Office

III

Media in a Period of Social Change

During the past twenty-six years of marked social change, most institutions have been criticized and challenged. A question asked in every study has given an overview of how well newspapers and television are regarded at the local level when compared with two other community institutions: schools and government. Since 1974, we have also asked about two other local institutions: churches and police. People were asked separately about each:

"In every community, the schools, the newspapers, the television stations, the local government, each has a different job to do. Would you say that the local schools (the ones you are familiar with) are doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job? How about the local (newspapers, etc.)—are they (the one(s) you are familiar with) doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job?"

Television stations have for 17 years held a commanding lead on good performance over the three other community institutions against which they have been measured since 1959. Television stations took the lead over other community institutions in 1967, and showed a marked rise between 1972 and 1974. This year shows television stations holding their lead, and four points higher than two years ago. They continue to be the only one of the four community institutions held in higher regard than in 1959, while two of the others are down, and one is the same. Five of the six institutions asked about since 1974 showed three to five point gains over 1982. Newspapers have gained gradually since their low point in 1971.

In the current study, while just under one quarter rate television's performance as less than good, very few rate it as poor—4%. As in the

Percent considering the performance as:		*Excellent or good* %	*Fair or poor* %	*Don't know or no answer* %
Television stations	12/84	74	23	3
	12/82	70	27	3
	11/80	68	29	3
	11/78	68	29	4
	11/76	70	25	5
	11/74	71	25	4
	11/72	60	36	4
	1/71	59	36	5
	1/67	64	30	6
	11/63	60	31	9
	12/59	59	32	9
Churches	12/84	70	18	12
	12/82	69	19	12
	11/80	65	21	14
	11/78	67	18	15
	11/76	66	20	14
	11/74	66	20	14
Police	12/84	69	28	3
	12/82	65	31	4
	11/80	62	33	5
	11/78	66	29	5
	11/76	65	29	6
	11/74	65	29	6
Newspapers	12/84	62	34	4
	12/82	59	36	5
	11/80	60	35	5
	11/78	59	35	6
	11/76	59	35	6
	11/74	58	36	6
	11/72	51	43	6
	1/71	48	46	6
	1/67	59	34	7
	11/63	55	36	9
	12/59	64	30	6
Schools	12/84	54	33	13
	12/82	50	37	13
	11/80	47	38	15
	11/78	48	36	16
	11/76	47	36	17
	11/74	50	30	20
	11/72	50	35	15
	1/71	50	37	13
	1/67	61	25	14
	11/63	61	24	15
	12/59	64	26	10
Local government	12/84	44	48	8
	12/82	39	53	8
	11/80	36	55	9
	11/78	37	52	11
	11/76	41	48	11
	11/74	36	52	12
	11/72	37	53	10
	1/71	34	55	11
	1/67	45	42	13
	11/63	43	43	14
	12/59	44	43	13

Note: Data for 1961, 1964 and 1968 are omitted because of space limitations but are available from the Television Information Office.

past four studies, only churches have a lower "poor" rating. All others have higher "poor" ratings, ranging from 10% for local governments down to 6% for police.

How Groups Are Portrayed on Television News and Entertainment Programs

With the rise of social group consciousness—among blacks, Hispanics, women, the elderly, etc.—charges have been made that television portrays these groups unfairly. In addition, there have been charges that some occupational groups have been unfairly portrayed on television. In 1982 a new question was asked to explore public perceptions of treatment of various groups on television *entertainment* shows. A list of groups was presented, and respondents were asked whether they think each group is portrayed on most television entertainment shows too favorably, too unfavorably, or fairly and as they should be shown. The consensus was that each group is portrayed fairly. The minorities who thought otherwise are inclined to think television entertainment shows paint too favorable a picture of doctors, lawyers and businessmen, and give an unfavorable portrayal of the elderly, women who are homemakers, teenagers, Hispanics, blacks, and blue collar workers.

In the current study, the same question was asked with regard to how groups are portrayed on television *news* programs, with four additional groups asked about: police, union leaders, major league sports stars, and politicians. Again, the consensus is that most groups are presented fairly. The exceptions are teenagers, who are thought to be portrayed too unfavorably, and major league sports stars and politicians, who are thought to be portrayed too favorably, and the elderly, who are equally thought to be portrayed fairly and unfavorably. Other groups where the balance is tipped toward an unfavorable rather than a favorable portrayal on television news are women who are homemakers, Hispanics, blacks, the police, blue collar workers, and women who hold jobs. Other groups who, in the main, are thought to be treated fairly in the news but who dissidents, on balance, think are treated too favorably are business executives, lawyers, doctors and union leaders.

"Here is a list of some types of people and groups sometimes portrayed in television news shows. (Card shown respondent) Would you read down that list and tell me what you think about the way each is portrayed in most television news shows—too favorably, too unfavorably, or fairly and as they should be shown? First, doctors."

Think groups are portrayed on television news programs:	*Fairly* %	*Too favorably* %	*Too unfavorably* %	*DK/NA* %
Clergymen	67	15	13	5
Doctors	61	29	7	3
Blue collar workers	59	9	27	5
Women who hold jobs	57	14	25	4
Lawyers	54	30	11	5
Women who are homemakers	52	6	38	4
Police	51	17	29	3
Business executives	48	35	11	6
Blacks	47	16	33	4
Hispanics	46	12	35	7
Union leaders	46	24	20	10
The elderly	45	7	45	3
Teenagers	42	9	45	4
Politicians	38	46	11	5
Major league sports stars	37	54	4	5

While members of one group or another were somewhat less inclined than the public at large to think that group is portrayed fairly on television news, with two exceptions the difference in levels of response was very small. One exception was blacks, who feel much more strongly that blacks are unfavorably portrayed. The other exception was those 60 years of age and older, who are somewhat more inclined than the public at large to say the elderly are portrayed *fairly* on television news.

Attitudes Toward National News Coverage

A question first asked in 1982 and repeated again this year shows how highly regarded television is as a news medium, and helps explain why for over a decade people have named television as their number one source of news. The question asked people to rate the kind of job television is doing covering eight different kinds of news: national news, local news, major national events, news about the economic situation, business news, major sports events, major international events, and general news about what's going on in foreign countries.

"Here is a list of a number of things that television covers. (Card shown respondent) Would you read down that list, and for each one tell me whether you think television is doing an excellent, good, not very good, or poor job of covering it? First, national news?"

Percent considering the job television does covering it as:		*Total excellent or good* %	*Total not very good or poor* %	*DK/ NA* %
Major national events, such as the inauguration of a President, a tornado or flood, etc.	12/84	94	4	2
	12/82	93	5	2
Major sports events	12/84	94	2	4
	12/82	90	4	6
National news	12/84	92	6	2
	12/82	91	7	2
Major international events affecting several countries such as the coronation of a Pope, a war crisis, etc.	12/84	88	9	3
	12/82	87	8	5
Local news	12/84	84	14	2
	12/82	86	12	2
News about the economic situation, such as unemployment, the inflation rate, interest rates, etc.	12/84	76	20	4
	12/82	80	17	3
General news about what's going on in foreign countries, such as elections, economic conditions, etc.	12/84	75	22	3
	12/82	75	20	5
Business news	12/84	67	26	7
	12/82	65	26	9

Large majorities rate television's coverage of all eight kinds of news as "excellent" or "good." Highest marks are given to coverage of major national events, major sports events, and national news, closely followed by major international events and local news. Television's coverage of

business news is rated excellent or good by two thirds, with the other two kinds of news—news about the economic situation and general news about foreign countries—ranking even higher.

Attitudes Toward Local Television Coverage

As reported earlier, a large majority of the public thinks television does an excellent or good job of covering local news. In addition, a new question this year asked people to rate the kind of job local television stations are doing in meeting the needs of the community by providing information about different areas: major events in the area, what's going on in local government and politics, crime and police activities, local economic and business news, consumer information, the weather, environmental problems, health and fitness information, information about local entertainment events, and information of special importance to the minorities in the community.

"Now, here is a list of a number of things that local television stations provide information on in their broadcasts. (Card shown respondent) For each one, would you tell me how good a job you think your local *television stations do in meeting the needs of* your *community by providing information about it—an excellent, good, not very good, or poor job? First, major events in the area?"*

Percent considering the job local stations do covering it as:	*Total excellent or good* %	*Total not very good or poor* %	*DK/NA* %
Major events in the area, such as strikes, fires, accidents, etc.	91	8	1
The weather	90	9	1
What's going on in local government and politics	79	19	2
Crime and police activities	78	20	2
Local economic and business news	70	27	3
Health and fitness information	67	30	3
Environmental problems	65	32	3
Information about local entertainment events	64	33	3
Consumer information	60	36	4
Information of special importance to the minorities in your community	51	41	8

Majorities, and in most cases large majorities, rate local television's coverage of all ten kinds of information as "excellent" or "good." Highest

ratings go to coverage of major events in the area and the weather. Next highest ratings go to coverage of local politics and government and to crime and police activities. Local television's coverage of information of special importance to minorities is rated "excellent" or "good" by over half, with the other five kinds of coverage rated even better—local economic and business news, health and fitness information, environmental problems, local entertainment events, and consumer information.

A question asked earlier in the survey, and new this year, confirmed television's importance as a local news medium with regard to disseminating news about organizations involved in improving the quality of life in the community.

"In all local areas there are matters of importance involving efforts to improve the quality of life in the community. For example, there is the work of organizations like United Way, church groups, Scouting, crime-watchers, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and suicide prevention hot lines, to name a few. Where do you see or hear most about organizations like these—in newspapers, or on television, or on radio, or in magazines, or where?"

Source most likely to see or hear about community organizations:	%
Television	61
Newspapers	34
Radio	11
Magazines	5
Other	3
DK/NA	2

Television is named as the most important source of news of such community organization efforts by almost two to one over newspapers.

Television and Freedom of the Press

A new series of questions this year covered people's awareness of and attitudes toward what things are protected by Freedom of the Press: news and information programs on television, other things on television, news and special news features in newspapers, other things in newspapers, news and information programs on radio, other things on radio, novels and other fiction books, nonfiction books, movies, newsmagazines and other magazines.

"The Bill of Rights guarantees Freedom of the Press. Does Freedom of the Press protect all of the things on this list, or only some of them?"

(If some or don't know)

"Which ones are not protected by Freedom of the Press?"

(For each thought not protected)

"Do you think (name item) should or should not be protected by Freedom of the Press?"

Protected by Freedom of the Press:	%
All things on list	56
Some things on list	32
DK/NA	12

Things believed to be not protected: %		*And:* *Think should be protected* %	*Think should not be protected* %	*DK/NA* %
Movies	16	7	7	1
Things on television (other than news)	13	7	5	1
Novels, mysteries, other fiction books	13	5	7	1
Magazines (other than newsmagazines)	12	6	5	1
Things in newspapers (other than news)	10	6	4	1
Things on radio (other than news)	10	5	4	1
Non-fiction books	10	4	5	1
News and information programs on television	6	5	1	—
News and special news features in newspapers	6	5	1	—
News and information programs on radio	5	4	1	—
Newsmagazines	5	4	1	—
Don't know what is not protected	13			

Over half of the public believes *all* of the eleven things asked about are protected by Freedom of the Press. The small minorities who think various things are not protected are more inclined to name non-news aspects of media presentations (movies, novels, things on television that are not news) than news elements in the media (news and information programs on television, news and news features in newspapers, etc.). Further, a high percentage of those who think various things are not protected by Freedom of the Press think they *should be.*

IV

Attitudes Toward Commercials

Since 1963, studies have shown a large majority favorable toward the concept of commercially sponsored television. In 1980, despite a rise in the minority disagreeing with the concept, the margin was still three to one in favor of it. In 1982 the ratio in favor of the concept widened again, to three and a half to one, and remains that this year.

"Different people have all sorts of things, both good and bad, to say about TV commercials—for example—that they are in poor taste, that they are informative, that they are amusing, that there are too many of them, etc. Now, everything considered, do you agree or disagree that having commercials on TV is a fair price to pay for being able to watch it?"

	11/ 63 %	11/ 64 %	1/ 67 %	11/ 68 %	1/ 71 %	11/ 72 %	11/ 74 %	11/ 76 %	12/ 78 %	11/ 80 %	11/ 82 %	12/ 84 %
Agree	77	81	80	80	80	81	84	74	78	72	74	74
Disagree	14	10	9	10	10	14	12	20	19	24	21	22
DK/NA	9	9	11	10	10	5	4	6	3	4	5	4

A new question this year demonstrates people's perception of the value of commercials on television. Asked where they are most likely to learn about products or brands of products they might like to try or buy, television commercials lead newspaper ads by a better than two to one margin, and lead magazine ads and radio commercials by even wider margins.

"Where are you most likely to learn about products or brands of products you might like to try or buy—from radio commercials, or television commercials, or newspaper ads, or magazine ads?"

Most likely to learn about new products in:	%
Television commercials	64
Newspaper ads	25
Magazine ads	16
Radio commercials	9
DK/NA	4

V

How the Study Was Conducted

The Television Information Office indicated the areas of subjects it wished to have covered in this year's study. The Roper Organization assumes full responsibility for the wording of the questions, the study design, and for the analysis of results included in this report.

This year, as in 1976, 1978 and 1982, the study was conducted in two sets of questions. Trend questions on news sources, community institutions, relative credibility of various media, and sources of information on candidates running in various elections, as well as questions on attitudes toward news coverage and attitudes toward commercials were included in a ROPER REPORTS study that was in the field in early December. All other questions, both trend and new, were included in the ROPER REPORTS study that was in the field in late October just prior to the election.

As in previous surveys, the early questions in the questionnaire dealt with the various media (newspapers, television, magazines, radio). Later the interview focused on television itself. This approach is always used so that answers to the earlier questions will not be biased for or against television.

A multistaged, stratified, area probability sample is used for ROPER REPORTS, as in all previous TIO studies. It is a nationwide cross section of the non-institutionalized population 18 years and older living in the continental United States. It is representative of all ages 18 and over, all sizes of community, geographic areas and economic levels. In each study—October and December—2,000 personal interviews were conducted by experienced, trained interviewers.

BURNS W. ROPER, Chairman
The Roper Organization Inc.

BURNS W. ROPER, board chairman of The Roper Organization Inc., has 39 years of experience in conducting research. His father, the late Elmo Roper, was until his death a director of the firm. The organization conducts custom research studies for a variety of individual clients. In addition, it has a subscription research service, ROPER REPORTS, which ten times a year monitors public opinion on a range of social, political and economic issues and is subscribed to by government agencies, trade and professional associations, leading firms in American industry and advertising agencies.

THE TELEVISION INFORMATION OFFICE was established in 1959 by the National Association of Broadcasters to serve as a two-way bridge between the television industry and its many publics. The Office provides reference and information services; publicizes programs of special interest; conducts research on public attitudes toward television; and issues publications and audiovisual materials on the structure and operation of the industry. It receives financial support from commercial and educational television stations, the three commercial networks and the National Association of Broadcasters.

Television Information Office
745 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10151

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AMERICA'S WATCHING

TIO

Since 1959, The Roper Organization has conducted a series of studies to learn how television stands with the people it serves. This research has tracked changes over time in perceptions of the mass media, and has also measured the public's response to specific issues which have come up periodically as television has grown and changed with its audiences.

The Roper studies have won the attention and respect of educators, government officials, civic and religious groups, concerned viewers, broadcasters and advertisers. They have helped define the evolving roles of mass media in our fast-changing society. Perhaps their greatest contribution, however, has been to increase awareness of a dimension of television which is, unfortunately, often ignored: the part viewers play in determining what television—or any other mass medium—can or cannot do.

TIO is pleased to have supported and published all the previous Roper studies of this significant part of our life, and to present this report of the latest study.

DR. WILLIAM F. BAKER
Chairman, Television Information Committee
President, Group W Television
Westinghouse Broadcasting Company

TIO

Roper 1987

Introduction

The news about television is good.

America's watching, and most Americans approve of most of what they see.

Positive feelings about television outnumber negatives by a wide margin.

Watching television ranks high among things Americans say they look forward to each day.

For the first time, the number of Americans who cite television alone as their primary news source has hit 50%.

For most people, television is a leading source of many kinds of community information.

Most viewers believe that local broadcasters are doing a good job of meeting community information needs.

Americans prize their freedom to choose television programs for themselves and their children; few would delegate to the government or special interest groups a controlling voice in program selection.

These conclusions emerge clearly from The Roper Organization's latest national study of television. They will, of course, be welcomed by the television industry. There is, in the population as a whole, a great deal of good will for television. People use it a lot. They have confidence in television, and in their own ability to choose from among its programs those that best meet their needs for entertainment and information.

As these findings show, not everyone agrees. Unanimity, in a society as diverse as ours, wouldn't be even remotely likely. But these Roper findings do provide an opportunity to measure public attitudes toward television, and to place them in perspective.

Because it reaches virtually everyone, television is a tempting target. There are few social problems in recent years for which television hasn't been first blamed, then urged to cure. Advocates of many specific ideas want to take advantage of the acceptance broadcasters have earned. They demand that television help them create the society they think best by conforming to their particular views.

But television, serving everyone, has no single social agenda of its own. Nor should it. Rather it must steer carefully among many social currents.

America is indeed watching, and the findings of this Roper study tell us that it is giving a high level of approval to what it sees.

ROBERT E. MULHOLLAND
Director
Television Information Office

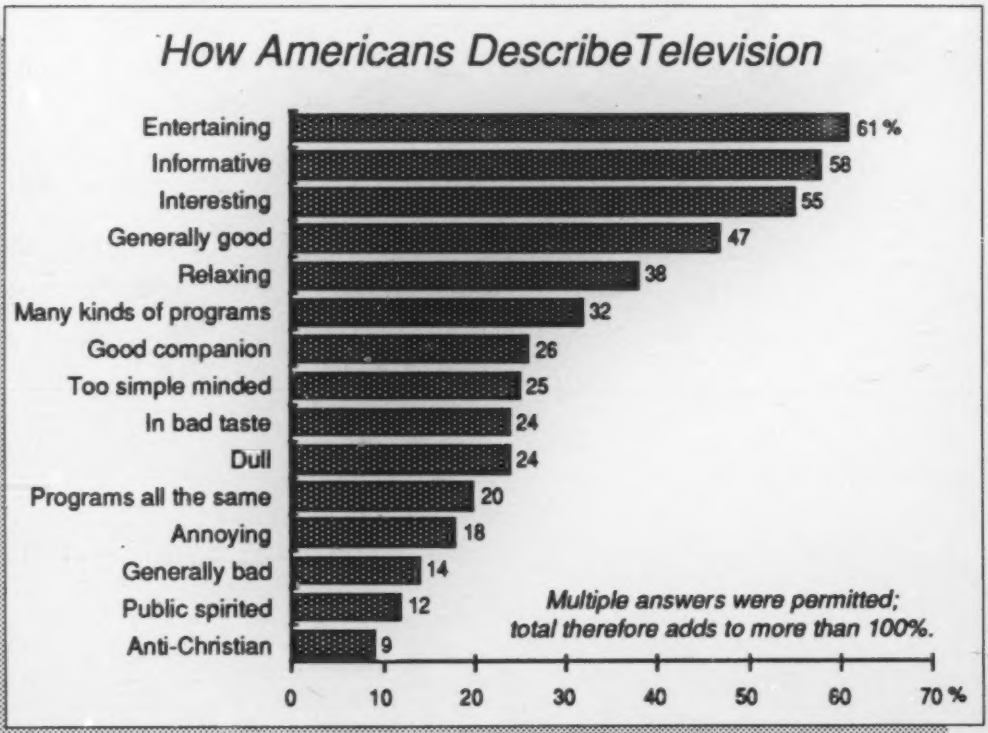
Why Americans Watch Television

Television is a permanent fixture in Americans' daily lives. Virtually every adult watches at least some television every day.

The three words most Americans use to describe television are *entertaining, informative* and *interesting*.

When presented with a list of fifteen words and phrases—eight positive, seven negative—to describe television, Americans place *only* positive features among their top seven descriptions. All of the negatives fall at the bottom of the list.

The one exception to this overwhelmingly favorable assessment of television concerns its public spiritedness. Relatively few people (12%) place this high on their list in describing the key things that characterize television for them personally, if only because few people watch television for this reason.



But the overall verdict is clear: Americans see many more pluses than minuses in television today. This is demonstrated by the fact that more than three times as many people call television "generally good" (47%) as say it is "generally bad" (14%).

When analyzing the data in terms of how individual respondents characterize television, four times as many people select *only* positive attributes to describe television (43%) as choose *only* negative attributes (11%) from the list of fifteen descriptions. This is clearly another firm vote of confidence in television. The hard-core TV critics, it would appear, are limited to one-tenth of the American population.

Even people who are critical of *some* things with television—selecting some negative descriptions, some positive ones—still have basically favorable views toward it. By a two-to-one margin, these "ambivalent" Americans find television "generally good" as opposed to "generally bad." And for very large majorities of them, their top three descriptions of television are—like the general public's—that it is entertaining, informative and interesting.

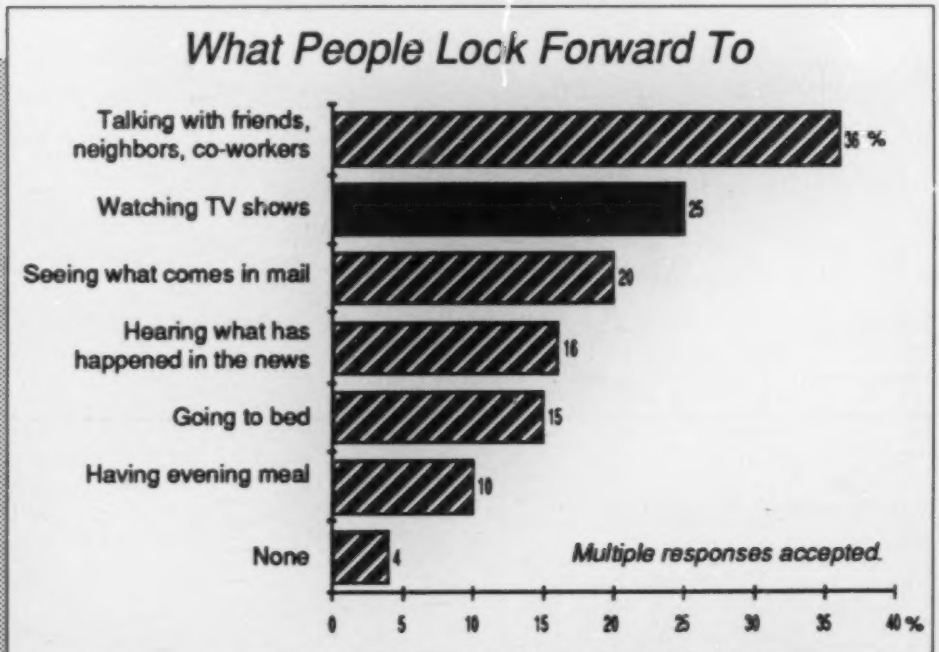
TV: Something to Look Forward To

Large numbers of Americans look forward to television every day.

When asked which of six things they most eagerly anticipate during a normal day, the largest number (36%) say it is talking with friends, neighbors or co-workers.

In second place, however, comes watching television shows, chosen by a quarter of the population.

Further down on the list of activities that people look forward to are opening the mail (20%), hearing the news (16%), going to bed (15%) and having the evening meal (10%).



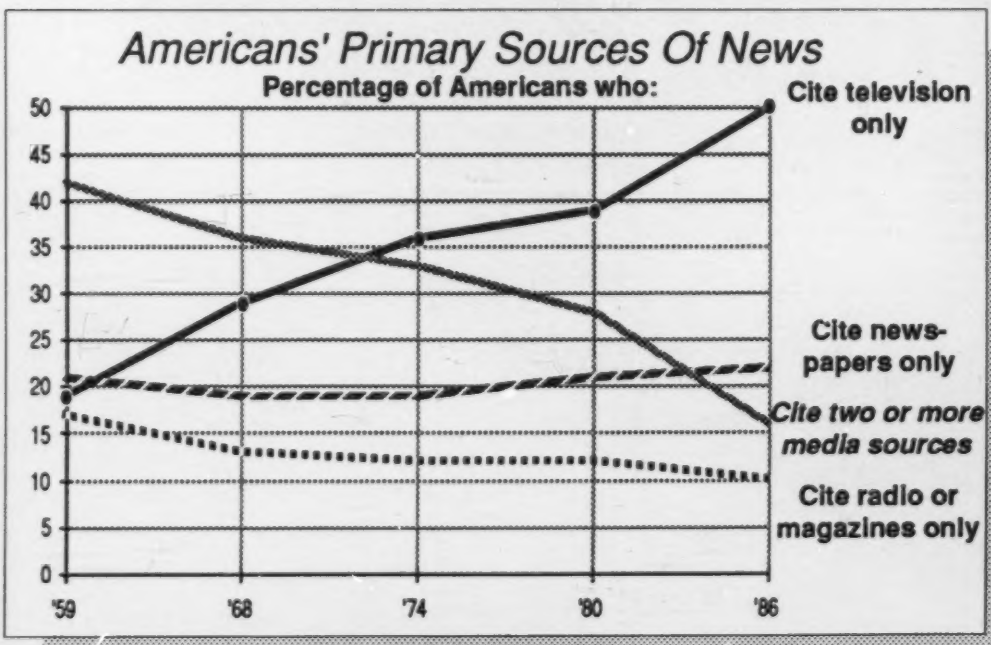
Television in the Information Society

For the first time, a majority of Americans cite *only* television as their main source of news.

For years, television has been the leading source of news, meaning that more people have cited it as a primary source of news than have cited other sources of news. Today, 66% of Americans mention television as a main news source, compared to 36% who mention newspapers, 14% who cite radio, and 4% who say magazines *(data page 18)*.

But the number of people restricting their response to television *alone*, as the chart below shows, has been steadily increasing—and has hit 50% for the first time. This is double the level of twenty years ago and up from 39% in 1980.

Television's gain as a primary news source has come mainly at the expense of other media, particularly radio and magazines. But

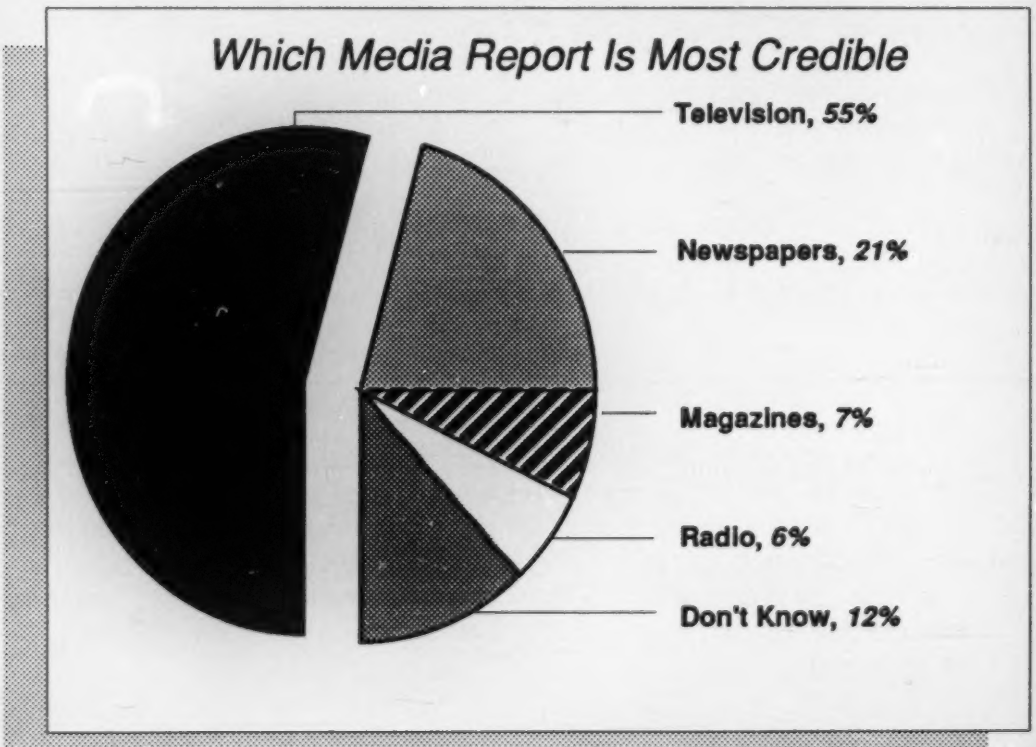


television has also benefited from an overall national trend. In 1959, 42% of Americans reported getting their news from two or more sources equally. Now, only 16% say they use two or more sources.

The trend toward television as the primary source of news has accelerated sharply since 1980.

Why is television increasing its lead as the primary source of news relied upon by most Americans? Because it is the news source most *trusted* by them.

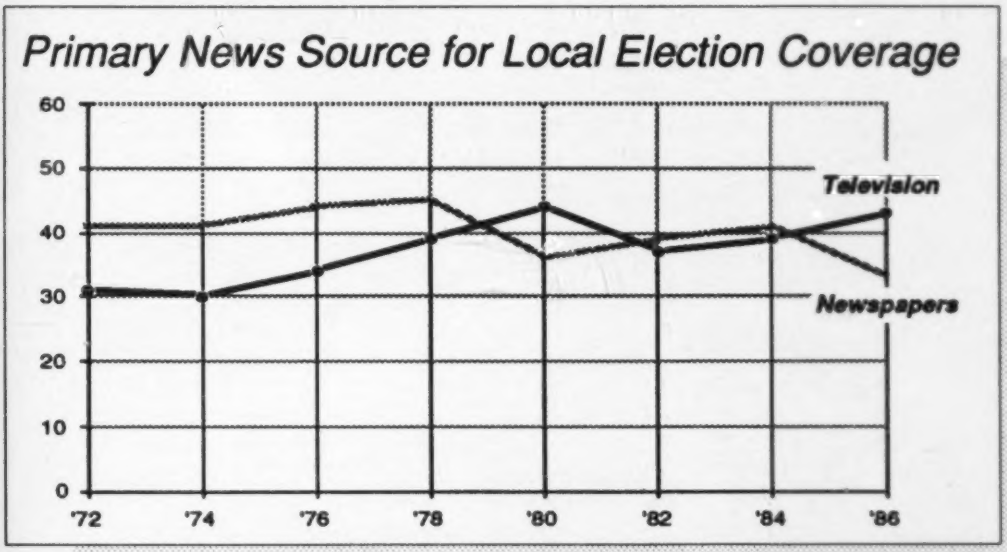
If conflicting or different reports on the same story were put out by television, newspapers, radio and magazines, a convincing majority (55%) assert they would be most inclined to believe the television report. Television has been perceived as the most credible news medium ever since 1961, and its lead continues to widen.



The Role of Television In Local Communities

For national and international news, television is the dominant source of information for most people. But what about local news—information that more directly affects the daily lives of Americans? What role does television play in local communities?

For years in local election coverage, television and newspapers competed fiercely for the voter's attention. Historically, newspapers won most of these contests. In 1986, television took a decisive lead, 43% to 33%.



For seven of ten different types of other local news and information, TV is the source on which most people rely. Most people look first to television for information on: the weather; major local events such as strikes, fires, and accidents; environmental problems; developments in local government and politics; crime and police activities; consumer information; and health and fitness information.

In the remaining three areas—information about local entertainment, local economic and business news and information of special importance to minorities in the community—more people turn to newspapers. Their edge over television in providing local business and economic news is a relatively narrow one: 44% usually get this kind of news from newspapers, while 39% get it from television.

Where Americans Get Their Local Information

	Tele-vision	News-papers	Radio	Maga-zines	People
The weather	77 %	8	17	*	1
Major events in area	59 %	31	9	*	4
Environmental problems	54 %	28	5	5	4
Local politics and gov't	52 %	37	8	1	4
Crime/police activities	49 %	39	9	*	4
Consumer information	43 %	33	6	13	4
Health/fitness information	42 %	17	4	21	8
Economic/business news	39 %	44	8	2	5
Information for minorities	30 %	38	7	2	11
Entertainment events	27 %	50	13	1	8

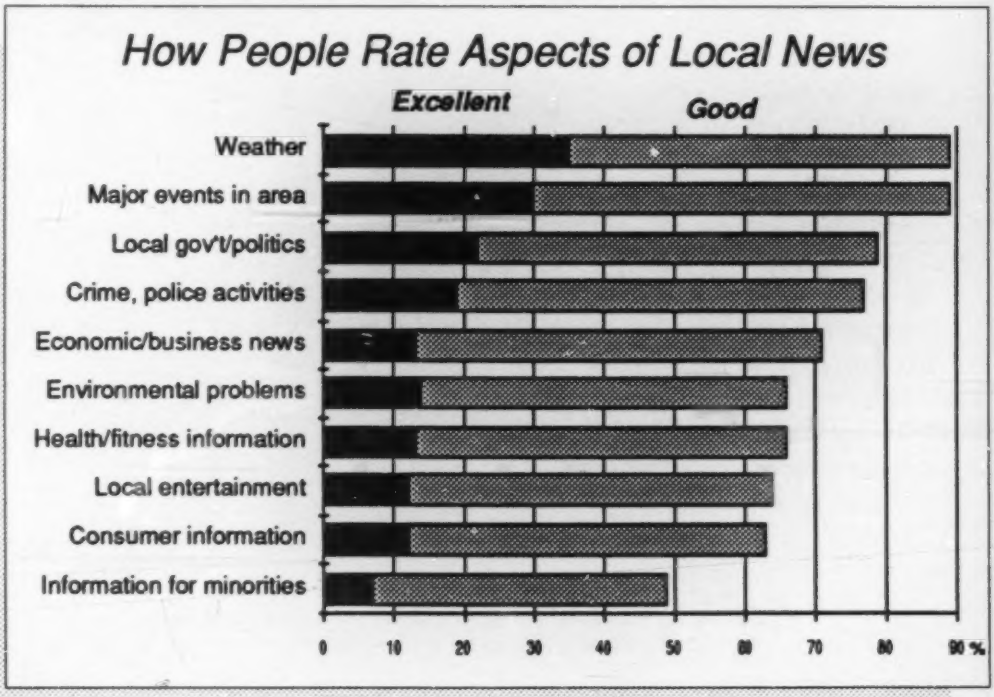
Percentages read horizontally: multiple responses accepted;
** Indicates less than 0.5% response.*

Local News: Doing a Very Good Job

So on the local level as well as the national one, television is the medium to which most Americans generally turn. Behind this public confidence in local TV lies two basic factors: viewers rate their local news coverage and local news reporters very highly.

For nine of ten types of local news coverage, large majorities say their local TV stations are doing an excellent or good job. The highest marks go to weather reports, coverage of major events in the community, reports on local government and politics, and coverage of crime and police activities.

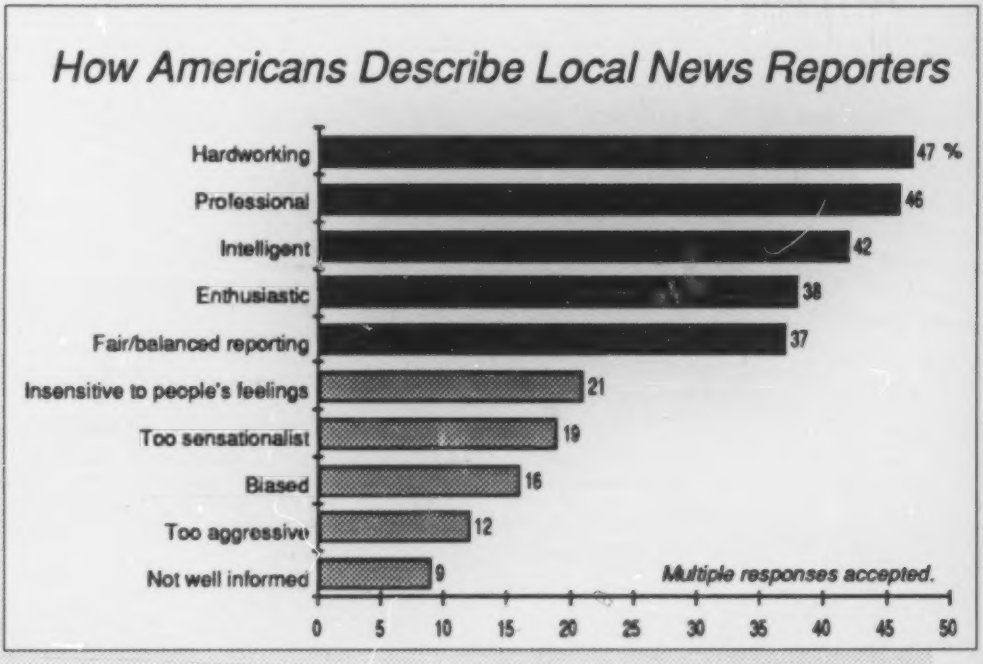
In only one area is there even a hint of dissatisfaction: information important to local minorities. Yet, even here, the assessment is still basically positive: 49% say local TV does an excellent or good job, 38% say a not very good or poor job and 13% have no opinion.



In addition to the high marks they give to local news coverage, Americans are generally pleased with their local television news reporters. When presented with a list of ten attributes, Americans say first that local news personnel are hardworking and professional. Local news reporters also receive very high ratings for their intelligence and their enthusiasm. And their reporting of the news is considered fair and balanced.

What little criticism of local TV news reporters exists concerns the way they treat some stories. About a fifth of the public believe these reporters are often insensitive to people's feelings and that they are mostly interested in sensationalism.

Yet local television news is applauded for its pivotal role in the life of American communities. It is trusted and respected—and looked to for much of the crucial information needed in daily living.



Censorship or Self-Control? Who Decides What America Watches

Despite Americans' assessment that TV news is doing a good job and that it is the most credible news source, and despite their belief that local news is fair and balanced, controversy continues about what Americans see on their television screens.

Some political groups have accused the networks of having a "liberal bias." Some religious groups criticize television for being "anti-Christian." And various social action groups have decried violence, sex and profanity on television.

These controversies all raise a fundamental question: Who should decide what the public views on television?

The public's answer: the individual viewer should decide.

For all six types of programming asked about—ranging from what is seen *generally* on television to specific aspects of TV like news coverage, entertainment programs, and the amount of violence, sex and profanity—vast majorities assert that the final decision should rest with the individual viewer.

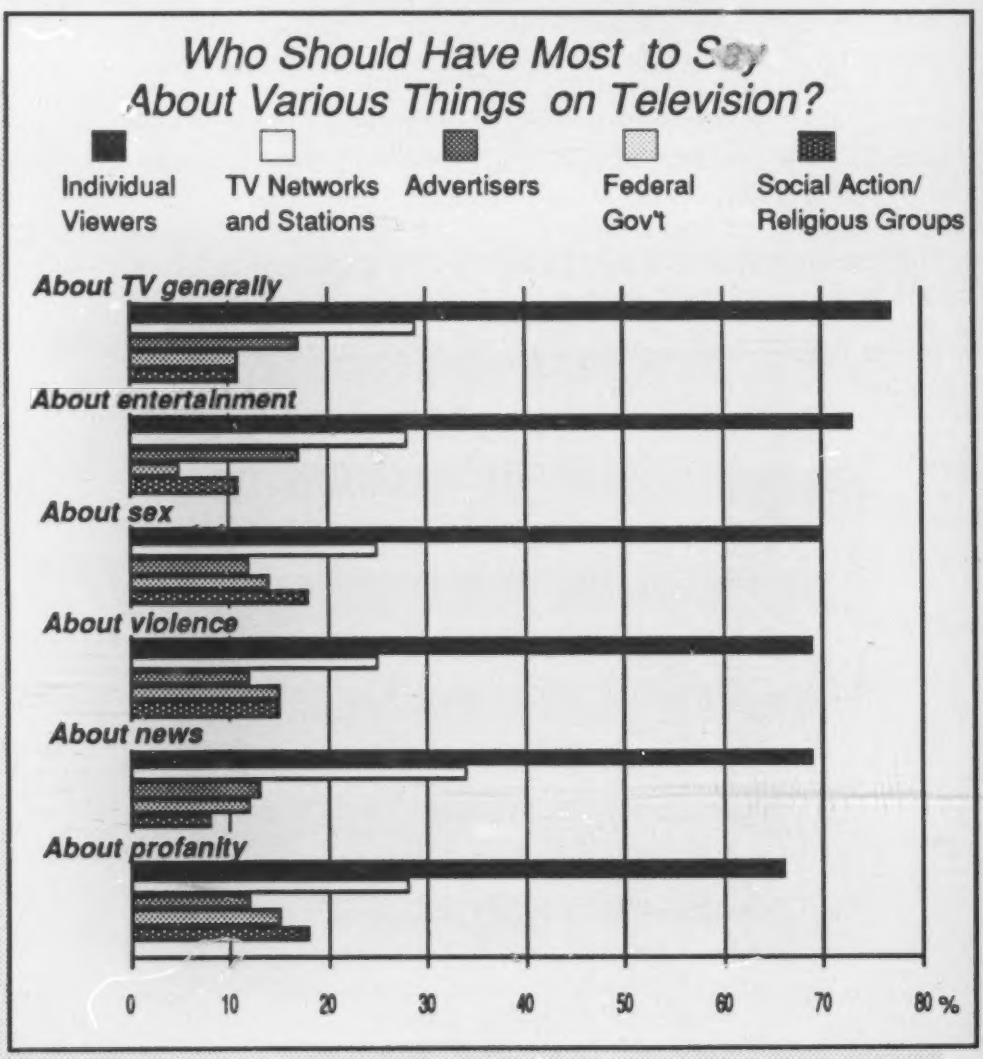
This strong belief in independence and individual self-control runs through the thinking of every kind of American—young and old, rich and poor, conservative and liberal. It is a striking reaffirmation of a basic American principle: the freedom of choice.

If not the viewers themselves, then it should be the television networks or local TV stations that decide which programs to broadcast. This is the choice of the second largest number of Americans for each of the six aspects of television asked about—although, in every case, it comes in distant second place behind individual self-determination.

Relatively few people think that the Federal government, the companies that advertise on television, or social action and religious

groups should have much say in program content. The public does not believe in a centrally-controlled media, whether by big government or big business. And it does not want a morally-controlled media by self-appointed "guardians of the faith."

Decisions about profanity, sex and violence on TV are best made in the home, according to personal and family standards.

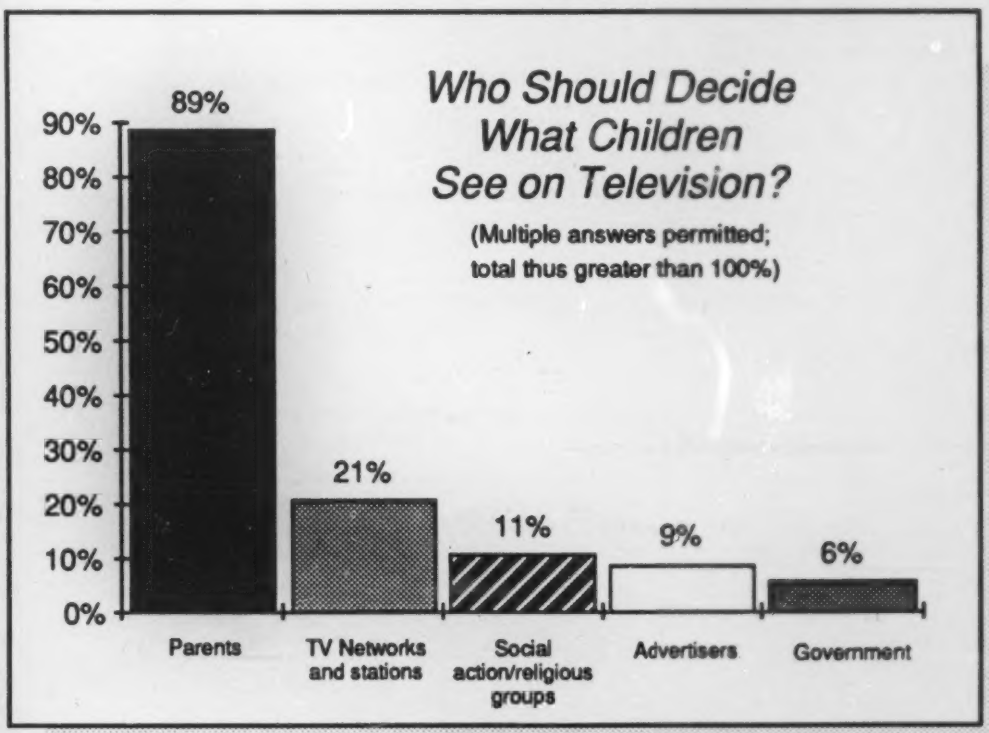


Children's Viewing: Parents Should Decide

Few controversies about what Americans watch on television are as perennial as the one concerning programming for children.

Yet if Americans firmly believe that individuals should control their own program selections, they are even more adamant that *parents*—not outsiders, no matter what their intentions—should supervise their children's television viewing habits.

An overwhelming 89% say that parents should decide what kids see, by granting or withholding permision to watch specific programs. Next come TV networks and stations (21%), followed by social action and religious groups (11%) and advertisers (9%). The group that the fewest people think should have a say in what children see on television is the Federal government (6%).

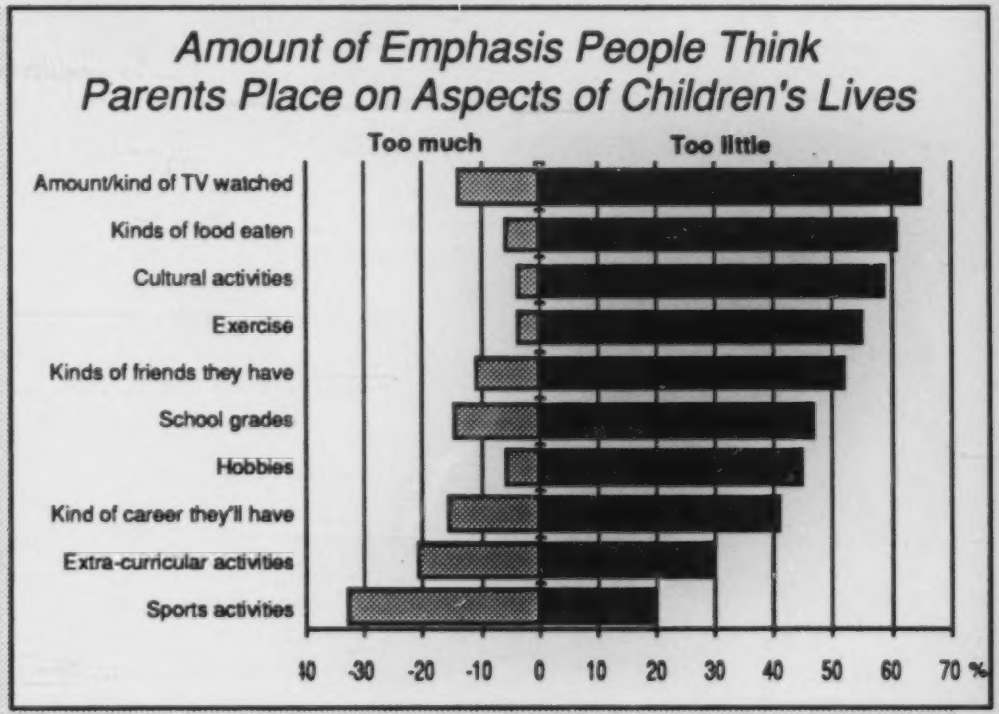


Enough Parental Guidance?

But the public has reservations about how well parents are guiding their children's television viewing.

When The Roper Organization, via its syndicated ROPER REPORTS research service, asked Americans in late 1986 whether parents are putting too much, too little, or the right amount of emphasis on various aspects of their children's lives, a striking fact emerged. A large majority—nearly two-thirds—think that parents are not paying enough attention to the amount and kind of television that children watch. TV viewing, they said, is the area most in need of more parental guidance.

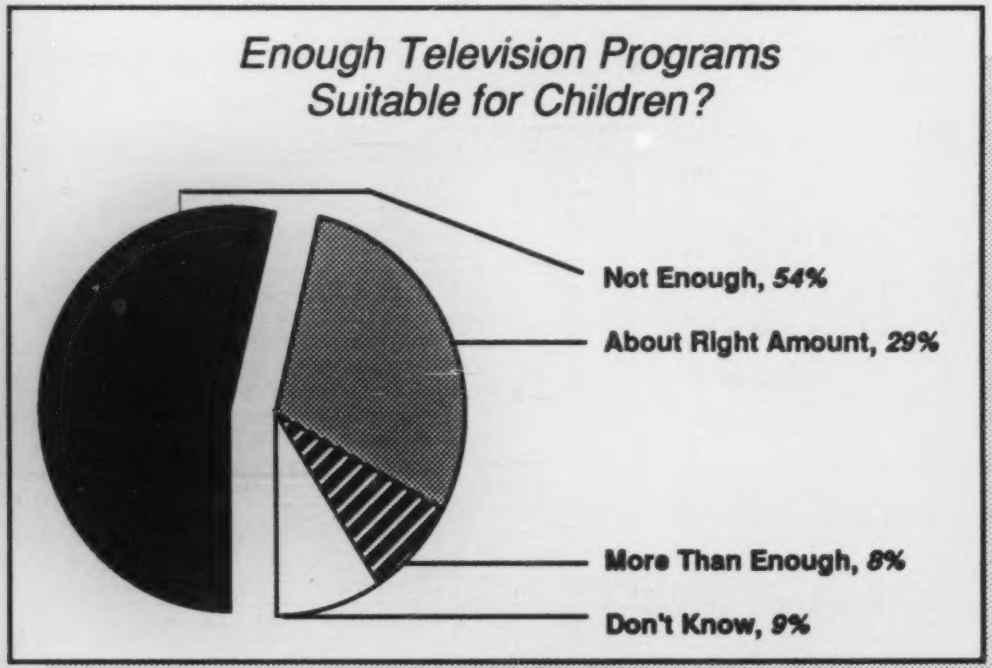
In part, this criticism of parents stems from a natural human reaction. People always want the best for children, and they are rarely satisfied that they have provided it.


Amount of Emphasis People Think Parents Place on Aspects of Children's Lives
Too much
Too little
Amount/kind of TV watched
Kinds of food eaten
Cultural activities
Exercise
Kinds of friends they have
School grades
Hobbies
Kind of career they'll have
Extra-curricular activities
Sports activities
40 30 20 10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 %

More Suitable Programs Desired

Nevertheless, there *is* some public dissatisfaction with the TV programs that children may watch.

A majority of the American people would like to see more suitable television programs for children. Almost 3 in 10 say they are pleased with the amount of programs now aired that are appropriate for children. One out of 10 think there is more than enough of this type of programming.



An Important Commercial Message

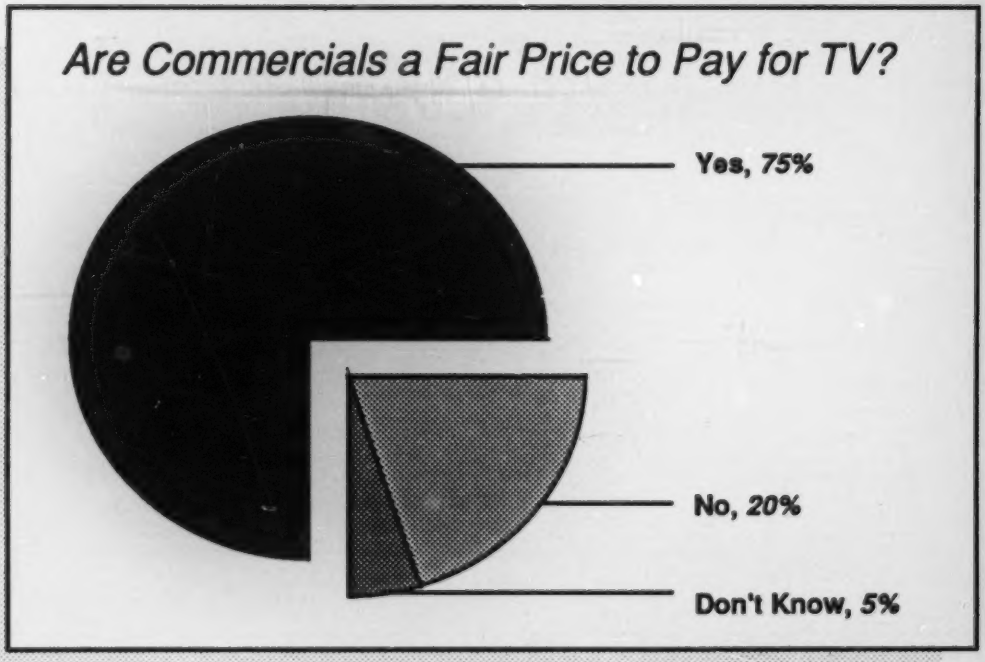
One of the most frequently heard criticisms of American television is that it is overloaded with commercials. There are also complaints that the number of commercials keeps growing and that they are broadcast louder than regular programs.

Such criticisms, however, ignore a more fundamental question: How could broadcasters present, and Americans see, the great diversity of television programming without them?

There can be no doubt where the American people stand on this basic issue. By a lopsided 75% to 20% vote, they think that having commercials on TV is a fair price to pay for being able to watch it.

This finding reinforces a fact that the TIO/Roper study has documented for over two decades: Commercially-sponsored television is broadly accepted by the public at large.

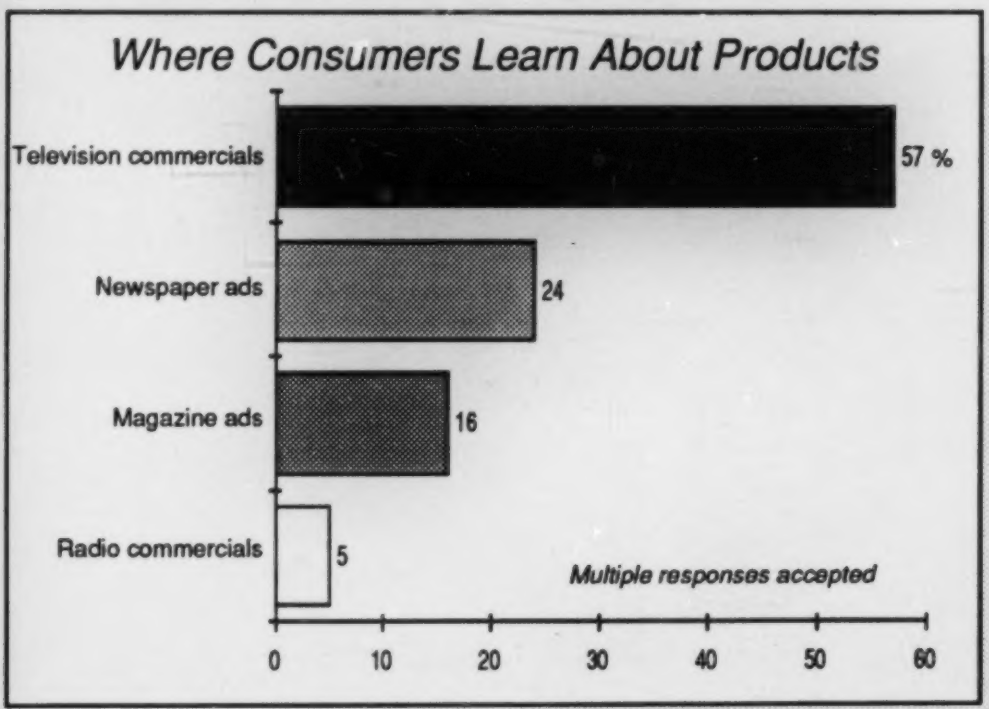
Beyond the diversity of programs that free, over-the-air



commercial television offers viewers, there is another important reason why Americans support the concept. That is, the commercials themselves play an important role in people's daily lives. They inform consumers about products or brands they might like to try or buy.

Asked where they are most likely to learn about products, Americans point above all to television commercials. TV commercials, as a source of consumer information, lead advertisements in newspapers by a better than two-to-one margin. They outdistance magazine ads more than three-to-one.

Commercials, therefore, are not only tolerated by viewers; they are actively used by consumers. Commercial television is not only Americans' main source of news about the world, as reported at the beginning of this report. It is also their main source of information about the American marketplace.



Methodology: How the Study Was Conducted

The Television Information Office indicated the areas of subjects it wished to have covered. The Roper Organization assumes full responsibility for the wording of the questions, the study design, and for the analysis of results included in this report.

The study was conducted in four sets of questions in 1986. Trend questions on news sources, relative credibility of various media, sources of information on candidates running in various elections, and who should decide what is aired on television, as well as the question on what people look forward to during the day, were included in a ROPER REPORTS study in early December. Questions on sources of information in local communities, ratings of local television news coverage, learning about products or brands, descriptions of television, and suitable programs for children were included in the ROPER REPORTS study in late October. The question on local news broadcasters was included in the ROPER REPORTS study in mid-July. The question on parental guidance for children came from a ROPER REPORTS study in late August.

As in previous surveys, the early questions in the questionnaire dealt with the various media (newspapers, television, magazines, radio). Later the interview focused on television itself. This approach is always used so that answers to the earlier questions will not be biased for or against television.

A multistaged, stratified, area probability sample is used for ROPER REPORTS, as in all previous TIO studies. It is a nationwide cross section of the non-institutionalized population 18 years and older living in the continental United States. It is representative of all ages 18 and over, all sizes of communities, geographic areas and economic levels. In all studies, 2,000 personal interviews were conducted by experienced, trained interviewers.

The questions asked and the national results for each question are on the following pages. The field dates for the questions are indicated in bold type after the question wording.

Here is a list of words and phrases that have been used to describe television. (HAND RESPONDENT CARD) Would you read down that list and call off each word or phrase you would use to describe television? **(OCT. 1986)**

Interesting	55 %	Generally bad	14
Dull	24	Informative	58
Entertaining	61	Programs all the same	20
Many kinds of programs	32	Public spirited	12
In bad taste	24	Annoying	18
Relaxing	38	Good companion	26
Too simple minded	25	Anti-Christian	9
Generally good	47	None	1
		Don't know	1

*Here are some things various people have told us they look forward to each day. Which one of these would you say you look forward to most? (MAY DOUBLE RECORD. IF MORE THAN TWO, RECORD "DON'T KNOW")***(DEC. 1986)**

Watching television shows	25 %
Seeing what comes in the mail	20
Hearing what has happened in the news	16
Talking with friends, neighbors, or co-workers	36
Having your evening meal	10
Going to bed in the evening	15
None	4
Don't know	3

I'd like to ask you where you usually get most of your news about what's going on in the world today--from the newspapers, or radio, or television, or magazines, or talking to people or where? **(DEC. 1986)**

Newspapers	36 %
Radio	14
Television	66
Magazines	4
People	4
Don't know	1

If you got conflicting or different reports of the same news story from radio, television, and magazines and the newspapers, which of the four versions would you be most inclined to believe--the one on radio, or television, or magazines, or newspapers? **(DEC. 1986)**

Radio	6 %
Television	55
Magazines	7
Newspapers	21
Don't know	12

Now here is a list of some of the kinds of things in the community that are reported on by the media. (HAND RESPONDENT CARD) For each one would you tell me where you usually get most of your news about it--from the newspapers, or radio, or television, or magazines, or talking to people, or where? (ASK ABOUT EACH ITEM) **(OCT. 1986)**

	Newspapers	Radio	Television	Magazines	People	Other	Don't know
Major events in the area, such as strikes, fires, accidents, etc.	31 %	9	59	*	4	1	1
What's going on in local gov't/politics	37 %	8	52	1	4	1	2
Crime and police activities	39 %	9	49	*	4	2	1
Local economic and business news	44 %	8	39	2	5	1	4
Consumer information	33 %	6	43	13	4	1	4
The weather	8 %	17	77	*	1	1	1
Environmental problems	28 %	5	54	5	4	1	6
Health and fitness information	17 %	4	42	21	8	4	7
Information about local entertainment events	50 %	13	27	1	8	2	2
Information of special importance to the minorities in your community	38 %	7	30	2	11	2	12

During the last election campaign, from what source did you become best acquainted with the candidates running in local elections--like mayor, members of the State Legislature, etc.--from the newspapers or radio or television or magazines or talking to people or where? **(DEC. 1986)**

Newspapers	33 %	People	13
Radio	4	Other	5
Television	43	Don't know	5
Magazines	1	*Multiple answers accepted.*	

Now here is a list of some of the kinds of things local television stations provide information on in their broadcasts. (HAND RESPONDENT CARD) For each one, would you tell me how good a job you think your local television stations do in meeting the needs of your community by providing information about it--an excellent, good, not very good, or poor job? First, (read item). (ASK ABOUT EACH ITEM) **(OCT. 1986)**

	Excellent	Good	Not very Good	Poor	Don't know
Major events in the area such as strikes, fires, accidents, etc.	30 %	59	6	2	2
What's going on in local gov't/politics	22 %	57	14	4	3
Crime and police activities	19 %	58	17	4	3
Local economic/business news	13 %	58	20	4	5
Consumer information	12 %	51	25	6	6
The weather	35 %	54	7	3	1
Environmental problems	14 %	52	23	5	6
Health and fitness information	13 %	53	23	6	6
Information about local entertainment events	12 %	52	22	9	5
Information of special importance to the minorities in your community	7 %	42	26	12	13

Here is a list of words and phrases. (HAND RESPONDENT CARD) Would you read down that list and call off all the ones that come closest to describing your impression of most local televison news reporters? **(JULY 1986)**

Enthusiastic	38 %
Too aggressive	12
Hardworking	47
Often insensitive to feelings of people	21
Fair and balanced in reporting	37
Intelligent	42
Interested mostly in the sensational	19
Professional	46
Not well informed	9
Biased in their views	16
None, don't know	8

In your judgment, which one or two of the people or groups on this list should have the most to say about what news reports people see and hear on television? (HAND RESPONDENT CARD) **(DEC. 1986)**

	News	Entertainment
The Federal Government by deciding what can and cannot be put on the air	12 %	5 %
The television networks and stations by deciding what they will and will not put on the air	34	28
The advertisers by deciding what they will and will not sponsor	13	17
Social action and religious groups, by recommending what should and should not be on the air	8	11
The individual viewers by deciding what they will and will not watch	69	73
None	4	2
Don't know	3	4

In your judgment, which one or two of the people or groups on this list should have the most to say about what people see and hear on television? (HAND RESPONDENT CARD) **(DEC. 1986)**

	TV	Profanity	Sex	Violence
The Federal Government by deciding what can and cannot be put on the air	11 %	15 %	14 %	15 %
The television networks and stations by deciding what they will and will not put on the air	29	28	25	25
The advertisers by deciding what they will and will not sponsor	17	12	12	12
Social action/religious groups, by recommending what should and should not be on the air	11	18	18	15
The individual viewers by deciding what they will and will not watch	77	66	70	69
None	1	1	1	1
Don't know	2	3	3	4

In your judgment, which one or two of the people or groups on this list should have the most to say about what children see and hear on television? (HAND RESPONDENT CARD) **(OCT. 1986)**

The Federal Government by deciding what can and cannot be put on the air	6 %
The television networks and stations by deciding what they will and will not put on the air	21
The advertisers by deciding what they will and will not sponsor	9
Social action and religious groups, by recommending what should and should not be on the air	11
Parents by deciding what they will and will not allow their children to watch	89
None	1
Don't know	3

Here is a list of things which play roles in children's lives. (Card shown respondent) Would you please read down that list and for each item tell me whether you think most parents today place too much emphasis, not enough emphasis, or just about the right amount of emphasis on these aspects of children's lives. First, the kinds of food they eat. **(AUG. 1986)**

	Too much	Not enough	Right amount	Don't know
The amount and kind of television they watch	14 %	65	16	5
The kinds of food they eat	6 %	61	27	5
Cultural activities	4 %	59	26	11
Exercise	4 %	55	34	6
The kinds of friends they associate with	11 %	52	30	7
School grades	15 %	47	33	6
Hobbies	6 %	45	39	11
The kind of career they'll have when they grow up	16 %	41	32	11
Extra-curricular activities	21 %	30	39	10
Participation in team sports	33 %	20	40	7

Thinking of the kinds of television programs that are suitable for children to watch, and also thinking of the amount of time you think children should watch television, would you say there are more than enough suitable programs for children to watch, or about the right amount of such programs, or not enough of such programs? **(OCT. 1986)**

More than enough suitable programs	8 %
About the right amount	29
Not enough of such programs	54
Don't know	9

Different people have all sorts of things, both good and bad, to say about TV commercials--for example--that they are in poor taste, that they are informative, that they are amusing, that there are too many of them, etc. Now everything considered, do you agree or disagree that having commercials on TV is a fair price to pay for being able to watch it? **(DEC. 1986)**

Agree	75%	Disagree	20	Don't know	5

Turning to something else, where are you most likely to learn about products or brands of products you might like to try or buy--from radio commercials, or television commercials, or newspaper ads, or magazine ads? **(OCT. 1986)**

Radio commericals	5 %
Television commercials	57
Newspaper ads	24
Magazine ads	16
Don't know	5

THE ROPER ORGANIZATION INC. has 54 years of experience in conducting public opinion research. Founded in 1933 by the late Elmo Roper, the firm is now headed by Burns W. Roper, Chairman. The Roper Organization conducts custom research studies for a wide variety of clients in business, government and the non-profit sector. In addition, it has a subscription research service, ROPER REPORTS, which ten times a year monitors public opinion on a range of social, political and economic issues and is subscribed to by government agencies, trade and professional associations, leading firms in American industry and advertising agencies. The Roper Organization also publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Public Pulse*, on major trends affecting business, government and the media.

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THE TELEVISION INFORMATION OFFICE was established in 1959 to foster understanding between the over-the-air television industry and its many publics. The Office acts as a voice for the television industry on social issues; provides reference and information services; publishes materials on the structure and operation of the industry; and produces videotapes showing how broadcasters serve their communities. It is supported by the ABC, CBS and NBC television networks, individual stations, the National Association of Broadcasters and the Station Representatives Association.

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